

*To The Hon: Alexander Morris D.C.L.
with the kind regards of the Author*

AN ADDRESS

TV

DELIVERED ON SATURDAY, THE 16TH MARCH, 1878,

IN

Old St. Andrew's Church, Toronto,

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE FORMAL WITHDRAWAL OF THE CONGREGATION THEREFROM,
AND THE FINAL CLOSING OF THAT EDIFICE AS
THEIR PLACE OF WORSHIP,

PREPARATORY TO THE OPENING OF THEIR NEW CHURCH ON
THE FOLLOWING SABBATH.

By JOHN BARCLAY, A.M., D.D.

PRINTED BY REQUEST.

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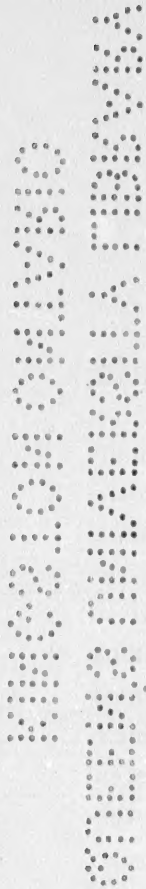
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A D D R E S S .

It was with not a little reluctance as you know, Mr. Chairman, that I consented at your request to take part in the proceedings of this evening. My hesitation, however, arose from no want of sympathy with you in the object of the present meeting; but was owing to reasons, personal to myself, of what may be styled a *medical* kind, and which had, for the last seven years, kept me in a sort of forced retirement from the active duties of the Ministry, and which, notwithstanding my present convalescence, makes me even yet chary of any closer contact than I can help with the scenes and associations of my former professional life.

But the circumstances connected with the present gathering of your congregation for the closing ceremony of a formal departure from this old building, call me forth from my now lengthened retirement, and urge the compliance with your request that, ere this Church is closed, perhaps forever, I should lift my voice once more within these walls, which for more than a quarter of a century have been the scene of my public ministerial labours. For your work here to-night is to bid a united farewell to an old friend, and, so to speak, to sound a requiem over your final separation from this scene and centre of congregational operations.

The law of the "Association of Ideas," as the philosophy of mind teaches us, works by *contraries* and *opposites* as well

as by *resemblances*. The present suggests the past—the new and the old become correlatives—the spectacle of an aged friend moving along before us with feeble step, sends back the thoughts to that same friend in the morning of life as memory recalls him, bright and brisk, when you both were buoyant with hope and full of the happy anticipations of life on which you then were entering. Let me thus for a few minutes give myself up to the suggestions of that law which thus regulates the daily current of our thoughts; and permit me, as a fitting theme, to revert to some of the earlier memories with which this Church is associated, and to give expression to some reflections they may suggest. Standing so to speak at its bier, we may think of its cradle. Called to look our last upon its old familiar features, as we would upon the death-stricken form of an old friend at the close of life, we may turn our thoughts back to the time—of which there can be but few here who have any personal knowledge—when this building was erected to supply the spiritual wants of those, most of whom have now passed away, who in this place represented the Church of Scotland of that day, leaving you their successors after two generations have well nigh gone, to deal as you list with this work of their hands to which you have succeeded by right of inheritance.

Induced by some such considerations, and cherishing some of these old memories, I ventured on the occasion of the laying of the foundation-stone of the new building destined to replace this old one, to narrate a little anecdote respecting the formal opening of this church in the year 1831. I refer to the incident I then related, as you may remember, respecting the attendance of the Cameron Highlanders—Her Majesty's 79th Regiment—when that corps

of *Scottish Presbyterians*, as they were to a man, transferred themselves in a body to this their new Church, from the doors of St. James' Church which they declined to enter; and as they marched away their regimental band struck up the old Scottish air, "This is no my ain house I ken by the biggin' o't." I was, as you will recollect, taken gently to task by a succeeding speaker, whose lamented death so soon thereafter, we all I am sure deeply deplored—sorrowing as we did, and do that one so young in the Ministry in this city; of such brilliant parts as a Preacher of God's Word; and with so many bright anticipations of usefulness before him was, in the mysterious Providence of God, cut down by the hand of death, before reaching the mid-time of his days. It seemed to our departed friend as if I had forgotten the lengthened harmony that had subsisted between the two Churches; and that my words conveyed apparently an expression of unfriendliness on my part towards the Church of England, in thus reviving the story. I had, as I thought, sufficiently guarded myself against any possible misunderstanding of my object in my reference to the incident on that occasion. And I may now add, that my own respect for the Church of England as one of the bulwarks of the Reformation, and my esteem and regard for the Very Rev. Dean who so worthily presides over the Cathedral Church across the street, and whose friendship I have had the happiness to enjoy so long, and which I do still retain and value after thirty years of friendly intercourse, might be my guarantee that it was no unfriendliness on my part towards the sister Church of England in Toronto, that prompted the narration of that little incident; but it was to illustrate rather the tenacity with which Presbyterians, even in the rank and file of the Army, cling to their

Church, and vindicate their right to retain and enjoy their liberty of worship secured to them by the constitution of their country, and confirmed by the Regulations of the Service; and as an expression of their attachment to their own Church of that day—the venerable auld Kirk of Scotland. But chiefly was it that I might put my audience on that occasion in possession of a little, simple, illustrative incident connected with the earliest history of this Church, which might be interesting to them to hear, as it seemed appropriate for me to give—considering the purpose for which the Congregation were then assembled.

But it seems I was not to get off so easily with my innocent rehearsal of the old story. I had immediately thereafter a friendly remonstrance in a kindly-expressed letter from an old friend—a gentleman I had known for many years and whom I highly respect. This friendly critic held that I had been misinformed entirely as to the *scene* of the occurrence of the incident which, in my narration of it, I had located here, and had connected with this Church. Whereas, according to his version of it, the event happened in Belfast, so long ago as the year 1826 or 1827, when, from a similar cause to that stated, a Scotch regiment was accorded the right to cease attending the English Church there, and in place thereof to attend Divine service in the Presbyterian Church of which the late Rev. Dr. Hanna was at the time minister—their band playing, as they left, the same old air I have named. And my friend, referring to that occurrence, of which he averred that he had a distinct personal recollection, imagined that I must have simply transferred the Belfast occurrence to this locality, without due warrant for the liberty I was supposed to have taken. Now, wherever it occurred, at least the

story of it was not unworthy of being repeated, and I deemed it not inappropriate to the occasion. But it is a good rule to be sure of one's facts, however unimportant, ere propounding them as true. And I had at hand the proof by which I afterwards established, even to the entire satisfaction of my friendly correspondent, the perfect accuracy of my version of the occurrence in every particular of place and circumstance as I had given them. My authority, which I now adduce, was the late Colonel Macdougall, long an Elder in this Church, who was a Captain in the 79th Regiment at the time, and from whose lips I had, more than once, the statement as I rehearsed it. He was connected with some proceedings in the Regiment with reference to it, and knew, of course, all about the matter—having even been the medium through whom the remonstrances of the men of the regiment against the attempts of the commanding officer to prevent them from going to St. Andrew's Church, were conveyed to that officer, whose unwise opposition to the wishes of the soldiers, and his unwarrantable refusal of their request, had led to the occurrence.

I am tempted to pause for an instant and exclaim, alas! how many difficulties do beset the writing of History! My friendly critic who has a great regard for the historic verities, was at the trouble of procuring some old contemporary newspapers and other documents, all the way from Ireland, confirmatory of his claim that a similar event had happened in Belfast; which I, of course, accepted as conclusive as to that fact, and we concurred finally in the conclusion that there must have been two distinct and nearly similar occurrences. The one at Belfast in 1826 or 1827, and the other at Toronto in 1831 when this Church was opened,

and when that little episode in its history occurred as I had narrated it.

History often repeats itself; and my friendly Critic now seeks his satisfaction in the thought that his Belfast Highlanders preceded my Toronto ones in that flank movement which made them both famous! Be it so: My explanation of the matter is that the coincidence must be ascribed to that tenacity of purpose and determination in the assertion of their rights, which is a peculiarity of our Countrymen. Great principles you know, when they possess the mind, need but the recurrence of like circumstances to ensure their development in action, when they who cherish them have the courage of their own convictions. And whether my Toronto Highlanders were, unconsciously in this proceeding, mere copyists of others—their fellow-countrymen elsewhere—matters but little to the lesson of the story. Although I am persuaded it was really impromptu and self-devised on their part, to vindicate their own rights for themselves and assert their own privileges when the occasion demanded it. All the world over, Scotchmen are aye ready to maintain their liberties. They are all alike "John Thamson's bairns," and ever prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder as veritable clansmen, under the same old national flag with its bristling motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit." Let me add that I believe I gave at least a tacit consent to a request from my friend, that if ever I had occasion to make public reference again to the subject, I should do full justice to the instance cited by him—as I think I may claim to have now done—whilst I still adhere to my belief that in my former narrative I did no violence to strict historic truth; and that is my excuse for this recurrence to the subject.

But in dealing with the history of Old St. Andrew's whose obsequies we are now celebrating, I am reminded of another circumstance, not devoid of interest, and which I may mention on account of the light it throws on the friendly intercourse of those early times when society here was in process of being formed. I may premise by stating that previous to the erection of this Church for services in connection with the Church of Scotland, Clergymen of that, or indeed of any other Denomination were but few in number in the whole of Upper Canada. And the Presbyterians of this place had, for many a day, to content themselves with silent Sabbaths or avail themselves of the services of some other Denomination. Even when such places as Williamstown, and Cornwall, and Kingston and Niagara had each its Presbyterian Church through the earlier efforts of the adherents of the Church of Scotland there, in this old town of York there was neither Church nor Pastor of the Auld Kirk, nor was there, for many a day, much prospect of either; and when the first movements were made towards supplying the long-felt want, they could only look to the old Central School-House (now gone), which then stood at the east end of Adelaide street, where a congregation could be convened for Public Worship according to the Forms of the Church of Scotland. But what as to a minister to officiate? To the credit of that worthy man, the first Bishop of Toronto—the late Dr. Strachan—it has to be told that in their straits he conducted Divine Service for them on the Sabbath afternoons, in the *ordinary forms* of Public Worship of the Church of Scotland, with which, from his Scottish birth and residence, and from the office of Parochial Teacher he had held in early life in Scotland, he was of course familiar. An arrangement like this, however,

giving proof of the familiar and friendly intercourse of those early times, while it showed the kindly nature of the good old Bishop, enables me to cite it here as an illustration of the friendly relations which have all along, I believe, subsisted between the two Congregations situated respectively on either side of Church street in this vicinity—which friendly relations I at least never did aught by word or deed to imperil or to lessen; and so I hope it may continue to be in the future: why should it not? We may be separate organizations—distinct regiments, so to speak, in the great Army of the “Church Militant.” Irrespective of all such distinctions there is a golden link which unites in spirit all true Christians under the one great Captain of our Salvation. In different parts of the field we may be arrayed; from different stand-points we may view the field whereon our joint battle may be waged against the common foe; and perhaps with slightly varied tactics and modes of wielding the armour and implements of war; but with the same enemy to encounter, and the same watchword with which to greet one another in the common cause—“To the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

But this arrangement as to the Sabbath services in those early times could not, of course, be other than temporary. Doubtless on the part of the Presbyterians of that day, there were strong aspirations after a more permanent and suitable provision for meeting the spiritual wants of themselves and their families in connection with the Church of their Fathers. And the time came round ere long when this feeling and sentiment began to move the minds of many of that generation, into a strong desire, in some practical way, to meet the attainment of their dearest wishes—the erection of a Church, and the settlement among them of a

Minister, in closest sympathy with their own religious sentiments and associations.

Let me introduce here a short narrative connected with the state of things to which I have referred, and which may be considered as furnishing an interesting example and illustration of the leadings of Divine Providence in human affairs. It takes us back well nigh fifty years ago in the history of this community. I give the story, as it was told to me, on the very best authority. Among the members of the Legislature of Upper Canada, which at that time held its sittings in the then town of York, were two gentlemen who came from a distance—both strongly attached to the Church of Scotland—men of mark who afterwards attained distinction in Public life—the one as an able Statesman, who ultimately held a high place in the Government of the day: I refer to the late Hon. William Morris. The other, long eminent as an upright and able Judge—the late Hon. Chief Justice McLean—with reference to whom, on the mention of his name in this place where we are assembled, and where he so long joined with us in worship, I cannot refrain from saying that the having enjoyed the confidence and intimate friendship of such a man, during my incumbency here, and to the close of his long and honoured life, forms one of my most pleasant memories connected with this, my first and last charge—indeed a sunny spot in my own Canadian life and history.

These two friends of the Church of Scotland, regretting in common, the then existing destitution of the Means of Grace here, so far as their own Church was concerned, shared the feeling and desire for a remedy which the resident Presbyterians of the place entertained; but which local effort had, as yet, done little if anything to accomplish in

the direction indicated. In this state of things the two friends referred to—Messrs. Morris and McLean, being at St. James' Church on a certain Sabbath nearly half a century ago, there fell upon their ears the words uttered by the Preacher from the Pulpit, either as the text of his discourse, or as part of the Lesson for the day, from Psalm 132, 4, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." In the circumstances the words sounded like a prophetic intimation to themselves—so completely did the sentiment accord with their own feelings, and thoughts, and previous communings on the subject. And under the inspiration and influence of the admonition which thus came home with such force to themselves, they pressed the matter anew upon the attention of the resident adherents of the Church of Scotland in this place, then but few in number. Steps were forthwith taken to carry out the often contemplated but long delayed purpose of erecting a Place of Worship in connection with the Church of Scotland; and this Edifice in which we are now assembled was in due time the result.

There are hallowed memories connected with this Church that must have been dear to many that are gone down to the grave full of years, and full of honours; and which may still find an answering echo in the breasts of some survivors who in subsequent years—from the first to this fifth decade of its history—have been associated with its varied fortunes. I shall be excused, Sir, I trust, if, in deference to these suggestions of the Past, I indulge the fancy for an instant, and utter the sentiment, or express the hope, that had it consisted with other arrangements, ere calling us together as you have done this evening, to sound a dirge,

or chant a requiem over the dead, in this the eight and fortieth year of its existence, the complete cycle of half a century had been allowed to run, of a connection between this Church and a living Pastorate ; and then we might have had in due time the *jubilee* as of an old friend still vigorous in its advancing years ; or that we should at least be privileged, so to speak, to celebrate its "golden wedding." But this evidently is not to be, and so we must be content to submit to the inevitable.

I am not fully in the secret of the reasons that weighed with you and your Congregation in resolving, *just at this time* to abandon this old Church-edifice which has a past history of its own, associated with many varied memories of other days, and of those who worshipped here but are now no more. Whether it may have been in deference to the prevailing taste and ambition of the present day for grander or gaudier Churches!—and certainly at a time when palatial residences abound, and finely ceiled mansions with the other appurtenances of increased wealth in the homes of the people ; it is not to be forbidden, but rather is it commendable when a corresponding advance is to be seen in the style and accommodation of the House dedicated to the Service of the Mighty God of Jacob ! or whether it be for the sake of greater convenience of locality for the families now forming the ordinary Congregation worshipping here ! or what other reason, or motive, impels to the immediate departure, now being consummated, from this oldest of all the City Churches, I take it not upon me to conjecture. Reverently, and with thoughtful musings, to undo the cords and lift the old stakes of this now venerable tabernacle is no inappropriate preparation and prelude to an entrance on the new order of things to which to-

morrow's sun will greet your approach, as you exclaim hopefully, with reference to another temple, "Let us go up to the House of the Lord." And amid all the freshness of the new start then to be made on the unknown future of your congregational history, the thoughtful and devout mind will not refuse to bear along with it into to-morrow's work of dedicating a new temple to the Service of Almighty God, the old memories and associations which yet survive and circle still around this House of Prayer, now being closed, to be opened no more for your Sabbath assemblies.

In all likelihood there may not be one—assuredly there cannot be many here this evening who saw the foundation of this building laid! Well nigh fifty years have passed away since your predecessors erected this then goodly edifice in which the Worship of the God of their Fathers might be established according to the forms their Fathers taught them. I can well imagine that it was a day of rejoicing among her Children here, when this Church was opened in full sympathy and direct connection with the Church of Scotland—the venerable mother of Presbyterian Churches throughout the world! Although, for this Congregation, recent occurrences have made formal connection with that Church less direct than it was wont to be, yet I was glad to learn from yourself, Mr. Chairman, some months ago when we stood around the corner-stone of the new church then being laid, that your Congregation still retained a warm attachment to the Church of Scotland from which they sprung; and although your People are now leaving this site which was honored by that connection for so many years, they are not withdrawing from the System of doctrines, nor abandoning the Associations and Sympathies with which this spot is connected; but that you

do still retain, and shall cherish yet, a deep-seated affection for your first love.

I venture to suggest that the frame of mind which accords with such thoughts and such hallowed memories, as thus appropriately encircle this spot, is not an unfitting one with which to engage in the transition work of this evening, or in anticipation of the coming Sabbath when you shall enter on the occupancy of your new Church. Some, there doubtless are, who in making that change can and will cast a lingering look behind to an honored spiritual ancestry who occupied these pews in the days that are now gone. Those who have this bond of connection with that past generation which saw and welcomed the erection of this House of Prayer, may well and profitably to themselves, turn, though it be but a transient thought, in the direction of a Past crowded with its varied memories—pleasant or sorrowful—with which this place is connected. They will not be the worse fitted by the retrospect for going forth with hopeful anticipations of the future, amid the new scenes and surroundings on which they are about to enter.

You are now taking a last look—bidding a final farewell to the old walls, which gave rest and shelter to two generations of her Children, who here sat under their own vine and fig-tree in the enjoyment of Christian privileges—rejoicing as they did that it was after the model of the Parent Church which gave us our Forms of Worship and Articles of Faith, fresh and true and pure as itself had drawn them from the Word of God, and “agreeable thereto” as confirmed by the proofs and authority of Holy Scripture to which the appeal ever lay in attestation of them. Something doubtless you must feel that you are leaving behind you, in being parted thus for ever from the material fabric

of this House of Prayer, with all its hallowed associations And yet what, after all, is that to the *something* you may bear along with you—if indeed you value and cherish for their own sakes the precious hopes which form the enduring inheritance of the true Christian! It is to the glory of the Gospel and of Him who is its Author, that these blessings are restricted to no particular local habitation. The principles it embodies—the precepts it prescribes—the blessed hopes it inspires, are for all times, and all places, and all circumstances in the changeful history of our race. The blessings of the Gospel are the inheritance of all the true children of God, who has himself said, “In all places where I record My Name I will come unto thee and bless thee.”

If in such a spirit you are now going forth to pitch your tent in another quarter of the city, but steadfast still to the old faith and the pious memories of our Fathers, I can only bid you God speed, whilst I cherish the hope and utter the prayer that the Spirit which could alone profitably inspire your devotions here, or render your services beneficial to the end of promoting your own spiritual wellbeing, may accompany you whither you go, and, in the new scene of your future Sabbath assemblies, direct your worship of Almighty God, who after all “is not confined to temples made with hands.”

I confess that to my own liking, change for change's sake is not commendable; and one of the special warnings of Wisdom, speaking through the mouth of Solomon, is directed against meddling with those who are “given to change.” And I venture to add that in my judgment of the Christian proprieties it should be only in deference to the strongest reasons of necessity, or a wise expediency,

that a church-edifice and site, long occupied, should be abandoned. It may be only a matter of sentiment, but some of the noblest efforts and aspirations of mankind spring from just such a source. And it is sentiment of a peculiarly hallowed kind which bids us cling to the memories of other days, with which our own religious life is associated, and to the scenes connected with the Worship of the God of our Fathers in years gone by. Surely to one who has emigrated from the distant home of his youth, bringing with him, as some of us doubtless brought from the old land we left, happy memories of quiet Sabbaths with their simple but devout worship of Almighty God, amid rural scenes, the sentiment is peculiarly congenial and appropriate! Generalizing my own experience in this regard, I would extend its lessons to you who may have been similarly situated, and I would exclaim, can you ever forget those happy, youthful days with their wonted Sabbath visits to the old parish Church, where for generations your fathers had worshipped—sitting as you then did among your kindred in the very pews they had occupied—but whose ashes now peacefully repose beneath those grassy mounds in the old Church-yard around? Surely it was no mere superstitious feeling that filled your heart, but one of a holier and more hopeful kind, a more substantial and exalted character, which thus amid such surroundings drew the inspiration of a higher devotion from the thought that your own kindred, perhaps for many generations, had worshipped there. Although you knew it was only the mortal part of your deceased kinsmen that lay there, and that the spirit had returned to God who gave it, yet you felt that here was a sort of loop-hole through which you could almost look direct into the world of spirits, and realize the influence of

their example as still hovering around the spot, so that "they being dead yet spake"—and imaginary voices from the graves without, seemed to mingle with the teachings of the living voice of the preacher within the Sanctuary, persuading you to be followers of those who "through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises."

That, of course, is the principle as operating in the full swing and sweep of its deeper development. And in thus referring to it, my words may even now awaken in some breasts dormant memories of the hallowed Past, as I have thus feebly and faintly sketched it. There are indeed higher motives and holier considerations even than these, for the edifying in the faith and for the guidance and encouragement of the true worshipper. But to cite the one class is not necessarily to depreciate the other. For when each confirms the other: when these concur with those; when sentiment on the one hand and conviction on the other mutually sustain one another for the joint attainment of the noble end of making us better Christians—truer and more steadfast disciples of our Lord and Master—who will venture to suggest that such influences should be ignored? Subordinate and secondary as these may be as motives for the Christian life—the sentiment which invites us to an intuitive response, though almost too intangible for philosophy to explain or for logic to discuss—still, even sentiment sinks deeply into our very nature and touches the springs of our social and religious life!

Little as you yourselves may have of such experiences, as thus have their source in a remote past, here in this new land, which to so large an extent has its history yet to make, even you should turn no deaf ear to the still small voice which comes from deserted walls, and a silent pulpit, and

unoccupied pews, where the echoes still do linger of past Services in which you were wont to engage with those of your own kindred and friends, who have gone where they are not now dependent on a worldly Sanctuary, but where "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof."

Let me counsel the members of this Congregation not to discard, nor even disregard the principle I have been speaking of, however small may be the extent to which they may individually realize it; but rather to gather from it lessons appropriate to their present circumstances in their final departure from this old church-edifice, which nearly half a century ago was dedicated to the Worship of Almighty God, and is now in process of being withdrawn from that Sacred use. The generation which saw the foundations of this house laid must, by this time, have almost wholly disappeared—those of them at least who had then reached man's estate—and of those who took an active part in the undertaking, perhaps not one survivor is now present to witness this final withdrawal from this place where Prayer has so long been wont to be made. And probably ere long, in deference to the inexorable demands of Commerce, or other Civic need, the beams and brick-work of this Edifice may be removed and the site be given over to another use and occupancy. But amid all this mutability, notwithstanding the abandoning or dismantling of this structure, there are some things associated with this House of Prayer which do yet remain untouched by those changes which time, in its onward march, produces in all material things. The Truths which have been proclaimed here by the Lord's servants who have successively ministered from this pulpit—the exhortations which have been addressed from time to time to

the sitters in these pews—the entire series of services of Praise and Prayer that have been offered up unto the Most High, by devout hearts in the solemn assemblies here convened on all the Sabbaths which have shed their light upon this House of the Lord, ever since its dedication to that Service—the touchings of conscience here experienced—the aspirations of faith here realized—the penitent confessions here uttered in the secret communings of the soul with God, under the sound of the Preacher's voice, and even in the presence of fellow-worshippers! These though all associated with the past of your history are themselves, after their kind, enduring things, in the connection they have established between you, the living worshippers, and the unchanging Truths of the “Word of the Lord which endureth for ever.” Not one of all the things that entered into the mind or heart of any worshipper here in the days that are gone—the truths that reached his understanding, the feelings awakened in his breast—but was stamped with a kind of immortality! By the very contact of these truths with the mind, and the respondings of conscience thereto, a connection has been established and a responsibility created that can never afterwards be shaken off—go where you will or seek as strenuously as you may to be dissevered from it. Some there may have been who resisted the truths with which they were plied, and who went forth again and again from this House of Prayer, as thoughtless about their eternal interests, and as worldly as when they entered it. Sometimes there may have been hearts here that, in the orderings of God's Providence, were bruised or broken by affliction—even as the flinty rock is splintered by the blows falling upon it—and yet each fragment of the stricken heart remained as hard as before! In mechanical operations it is found that the metal which is not broken, is sometimes

only made all the harder, by the repeated blows of the hammer. And so the hammer of *The Word* may have been plied upon some hearer, and yet no saving or salutary result have followed: and instances also, there may have been, where the very familiarity with the words of Holy Scripture, has been followed only with a fatal induration and obduracy! Still that is not the appointed object and mission of the Preached Gospel, but a manifest perversion of it. The Word of God in its own nature and design is quick and powerful. And the divine promise, respecting it, is that Christ's own presence and countenance will attend his faithful servants so that they shall not labour in vain, nor preach it to no good purpose, if they labour faithfully in word and doctrine. At all events the commission is imperative to preach the Gospel "whether men will hear or whether they will forbear."

But amid all these drawbacks and discouragements, which, less or more, may have been experienced or exemplified within this House of Prayer in connection with the preached Word, during your lengthened occupancy of it, happier results must doubtless have followed in instances not a few—of inquirers seeking here the way to Zion, and being successful in their search—of earnest Christians rejoicing in the communion and fellowship with their God and Saviour, to which they were welcomed in this House dedicated to His name—of mourners in Zion seeking comfort in this trysting-place of the Lord's appointment, where they met in spirit with Christ himself, and received earnest and foretastes of that "rest which remaineth for the people of God"—hungry souls finding Spiritual nourishment in this house of their pilgrimage, in the pauses of their Sabbath journeys through the pilgrimage of life! It is not likely that the honest and

earnest services, for nearly half a century, of the several Ministers of Christ who from this pulpit have expounded the Word of God with more or less force and fuiness, should not have been instrumental, under the aid of His heavenly grace, in savingly impressing some hearts, and comforting others, and helping poor fellow-sinners in the way to Heaven. And thus, possibly, of more than appeared to human eye, it may come at last to be told, concerning the two generations of worshippers who have sat in these pews, of "this man and of that man that he was born here"—that here he entered on the Spiritual life, or was here advanced a stage in his journey Zionward.

It is not wise for one to be too confident in assertions respecting results which only eternity will fully disclose. The day shall at length declare it. But one thing at least is certain even now, that in the record of the history of every worshipper who ever sat in these pews, there is a silent witness in these now deserted walls, whose testimony can never be set aside, as to the use to which have been put the long aggregate of Sabbath Services—the sermons and the prayers—the praises and the exhortations—all the work and all the aims of which this house has been the scene.

And this is true both of Speakers and of Hearers, from first to last of this Church's history ! The full meaning and force of that record may not be realized now, for our present lot is to see darkly as through a glass ; but its testimony is now sealed against that day, and it shall all be read in the light of eternity when the Lord cometh to take account of stewardships—whether of the public Teacher, or of the private member—when the humble Christian who has been true to his faith in the unseen shall enter on the enduring

inheritance, and they who have turned many to righteousness shall "shine as the stars for ever and ever."

Giving utterance, as I now do, to these closing sentences on the eve of the final separation from this Old Church, the picture presents itself to my mind's vision, of a little group of five—myself among the number, who during the years of its existence have ministered from this Pulpit. Of these I happen to occupy the central position, with, on the one hand, two predecessors in the Ministry of this Church—of whom the former has years ago finished his earthly career, leaving behind him the record of an earnest and devoted ministry, both here and elsewhere; and the latter, following the convictions of his own mind, though it involved a marked change of views on important points of belief and of Church organization, afterwards cast in his lot with another section of the Christian Church! Whilst on the other hand, of my two Successors in this Church, it is enough for me in their presence to say that they have already proved themselves able Ministers of the New Testament; and to utter as I do with all sincerity the prayer for each that his "bow may long abide in strength," and that among the People to whom they so acceptably minister, they may both have many Seals of their Ministry.